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Military Order



of the

Loyal Legion

of the



United States.



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COMMANDERY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

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WAR PAPER 86.

The Loyal Legion and the Civil War.









*J. P. B. Sands.  
formerly Actg Master U.S.N  
'62 to '67*

# Military Order of the Loyal Legion

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86

The Loyal Legion and the Civil War.

BY

Companion

**FRANCIS P. B. SANDS,**

Acting Master, U. S. Navy.

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## The Loyal Legion and the Civil War.

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A few days since, there appeared in a local paper a communication from one who declared that the veterans of the Civil War were no longer to be considered as useful for any purpose connected with the history of those momentous days; that their sons were even to be henceforth silent, and to leave to the veterans of the Spanish-American War the right of way on all official occasions as the only representatives of the fighting force of the nation's war veterans.

Whilst thinking over the possible effect, hereafter, of such reckless suggestions made at this time, I recalled a short account I had read of an incident which occurred in England, preceding the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. It recited that a distinguished Japanese nobleman, having been engaged for some months studying the military preparedness of the great nations of Europe, was being entertained at a house party gathered together by one of Great Britain's leading statesmen.

The Japanese nobleman, having intimated his approaching departure for home, one of the guests with a view to drawing out his opinions on their Government's grandeur and power, was surprised at the frankness of the reply he received.

The Japanese nobleman, frankly stated that he had been sent to observe and report upon the preparedness of the different governments for war, to the end that Japan might be fully informed and know where to seek an ally in case of trouble with Russia. He compared his observations in the several nations, and declared that England was the weakest of all in its preparedness for war, in respect of the numerical strength of its fighting force, and because of the woeful deficiency in

regard to national loyalty which he had noticed throughout England. Exclamations from the hearers at such a statement were followed by a criticism of its accuracy, and reference was made to England's reserves, who could always be relied upon in an emergency.

The Japanese then reminded his hearers that he had studied the characteristics of the English; that he had counted the many thousands of idle, unemployed men who thronged the highways of the great city of London, who were incapable of being utilized as soldiers; that nowhere did he see any thought amongst the young men of training for military service; that it was true that when the races at "Epsom" and "the Derby" were advertised, every highway was thronged by enthusiastic thousands; that during the season when the "cricket games" were on, every field of players was surrounded by interested gatherings, but he had noticed that when the race winners were announced and the last wicket was down the crowds dissolved and general apathy prevailed everywhere; that he recalled that when the Reserve force mentioned was mobilized at the time when there was talk of trouble with Germany he had noted that it took over six weeks to get a force together of not more than 18,000 men, who proved to be little more than raw recruits, totally inadequate to form a line of defense against any invasion of England's shores!

He closed by stating that in his country the children, from the moment they began to walk, were taught and impressed with the knowledge that the welfare and greatness of Japan was to be their main object in life, to the sacrifice of their personal comfort, even to the surrender of life itself, at the call of their emperor; and such loyalty and devotion being inculcated throughout their earlier years their enthusiastic allegiance could always be relied upon, with the result that they were trained constantly for military duties, and so efficiently, that



they had a nation of warriors always ready for service, obedient to orders whenever the call to arms should be made.

Whether this statement is historically true or not is immaterial, so far as this paper is concerned. There was food for thought, however, in the suggestions, and they justify a brief "retrospective glance into futurity."

We should be able to prove the falsehood of the Spanish War veteran's statement. We should teach the world that the United States can produce a million soldiers ready to spring to the defense of their country at any point that might be threatened by any enemy and at any time of danger to the public welfare.

As I pondered over the field of thought which came before me, I turned to the pages of the Constitution of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion; and, in the third article thereof, I read as the purposes and objects of its existence as an organization, the following:

"To cherish the memories and associations of the war waged in defense of the unity and indivisibility of the Republic . . . to foster the cultivation of military and naval science; enforce *unqualified* allegiance to the General Government; protect the rights and liberties of American citizenship, and maintain National Honor, Union and Independence."

In those few lines was an answer to all that was stated as above, in so far as they are applicable to the citizen soldiery of the United States.

They set forth the obligations of membership in our Order, a faithful observance of and regard for which by the members of the Loyal Legion will prove that our nation is not wanting in any of the elements necessary for the protection of its honor and future prosperity.

The suggestions of the Spanish War veteran are futile and absurd. He must be the ungrateful son of a worthy sire or there must have been a defect in his father's record!

That little war of 1898 was merely required by the dictates of humanity, to put an end to the horrors that oppressed a people living near our coast-line. Its results were liberty from tyranny for Cuba, and the acquisition of a distant territory, never desired by our nation, but taken in under the protection of the Stars and Stripes as a necessary outcome of Dewey's victory at Manila on May 1, 1898.

This was a result possibly of considerable commercial importance and value to some of our people at home, but of more vast benefit to the millions who have been raised from savagery to the enjoyment of the blessings our country offers to all of its citizens!

We know that an illustration as to the perfection of true citizenship and loyalty to the nation was presented by the response in 1861 to the *call* for defenders of the Union; *that appeal* for citizens to rally to the defense of the flag and to prevent the attempted disruption of the States!

The lessons of that war of four years of struggle teach the necessity of unfaltering allegiance and devotion to the nation, which we bespeak from all citizens when we point to our flag as being the shield of all over whom it floats!

To the native born and to the alien who is a naturalized citizen, the lessons of that war, when kept alive by frequent and continuous recitals of its history, will always bear fruit in the magnificent growth of that love of our country that will necessarily follow.

In the duty imposed upon us, veterans of that war, of cherishing the "memories and associations of that war," we find the true reason for our monthly gatherings at headquarters in every State where recitals of personal experiences, of incidents of

battles, of the excellence of campaign management at the various periods of the war wherever the contending armies were opposed, awaken thrills of interest in each breast, and make each individual cipher of us realize the wonderful results of the brilliant leaderships of our great armies by the generals whose campaigns, if long drawn out, led to victory at the end and ultimate peace for the nation.

It is fortunate that so many still survive to bear testimony to the brilliant victories of that great war.

To attempt to review the entire record of the Civil War would be life-long labor, but, after the manner contemplated by that section of our Constitution of reviving individual recollections of experiences connected with the service, we at our monthly meetings secure most interesting accounts that are not touched upon in the official reports, yet are illustrative of conditions and circumstances that throw light upon, give local color to, and solve many questions about which the historians of the war otherwise would be in doubt.

The narratives that are presented at our monthly meetings awaken the interest we naturally have in respect of the part we took in those memorable days, and being told with utmost brevity find attentive audiences, and the stories told bring forth other corroborative accounts of other companions, and so the interest revived grows and becomes impressed upon the hearers and valuable and instructive are the lessons that flow from such memories.

To illustrate my point, the war papers read at our monthly meetings lead us to look back with ever-increasing interest in the retrospect to those early days when straggling companies and regiments of untrained men were being concentrated in the east and west to be drilled into perfect military organizations, ready for any duty and to meet any trying demands of military service. We recall the history of the weary waiting

in the camps; of the fatiguing marches under the glaring heat of the sun or in the midst of storm to reach the points of danger; we are reminded of the thousands suffering in the hospitals; of the cries of the wounded in their cots. We almost listen again to the scattering shots of the outposts; to the rattle of rifle shots as the advanced lines meet the enemy; to the roar of cannon, the bursting of shells; and recall the impetus of the charging regiments and the beating of our hearts as they march to protect the flag! We recall the emulation between the various armies of the "Potomac," of the "Cumberland," and of the "Tennessee," as they sought and fought to record their successes in those years of the war.

We read of the wonderful endurance of the men; of the obliteration of State line feelings when the different regiments and brigades were amalgamated in the various army corps; and we see that such, the great results of their services, could only be accounted for by the fact that no matter whether the regiments came from Maine or Illinois, from Ohio or Pennsylvania, there was one common, unanimous heart-beat throughout the armies that was responsive to the one call, "Save the honor and perpetuity of the Union!"

When the achievements of General Grant in the west and before Richmond are recounted; when the incidents of General Sherman's march "from Atlanta to the sea" are told by the participants therein; when we are graphically told of Sheridan's wild gallop to Winchester "twenty miles away," when rout was turned to victory; when we hear the stirring descriptions of the brilliant struggles on the field of Gettysburg, our very souls are stirred again and thrilled by the memories of what was accomplished by the gallant men who followed those heroes to victory!

When we listen to accounts of the brilliant victories of Dupont at Port Royal; of Farragut at Mobile Bay and on the

Mississippi River; of Porter on the Red River and at Fort Fisher; and to the daring combats of Worden in the "Monitor" against the "Merrimac;" of Lamson on the Nansemond; of Flusser and Cashing in the Sounds of North Carolina, and countless lesser adventures, our hearts beat responsive to the applause which greets the recitals, and it is inspiring to note the youthful vigor that comes into the assemblage when they spontaneously rise and join again and again in singing our national hymns, and the songs that were sung by the gallant men who fought the battles of that war! Is not love of country and devotion to the flag thus taught and perpetuated?

What a glorious review of historical incidents does not that short recital present, and it is our duty to cherish those memories, nor for the purpose of self-glorification, however, but to serve the purpose of Article III of the Constitution of our Order.

If that purpose is adhered to loyally the lesson to be taught will be fraught with important results for generations yet to come. Therefore it is that our Recorder urges upon all companions to prepare their recollections of war service, when they illustrate war incidents of service, and have them read at our meetings.

Particularly do we recommend that those companions who belong to the naval service should actively interest themselves in fulfilling our obligations to our country as provided in that third article of the Constitution of our order; in "fostering the cultivation of military and naval science" in order to "protect the rights and liberties of American citizenship."

It should be a most agreeable and congenial task for them, by reason of their high professional attainments and up-to-date knowledge and experience, to draw most interesting contrasts between the Navy and its accomplishments in the Civil War, and the Navy of 1912, and what it is capable of accomplishing for the protection and enforcement of the rights of American citizens in all the waters of the globe accessible to our vessels.

Such papers would attract wide attention; they would not only revive delightful memories of the naval heroes of the Civil War, but would interest and instruct all who have to act officially in guarding our country's interests; they would enlist the voices and influence of our fellow-citizens whose votes would be obeyed by our legislators, who would thus be brought to active advocacy of a greater Navy which, equipped and prepared for every national emergency, would be the most potent factor leading to universal, international peace—so much longed for by the world but which is still manifestly so far away in the future.

Assuredly amongst the large number of our companions there are many who have interesting recollections from which to draw for our entertainment, and who may be willing to recount them in a way that will teach the present and future generations what their ancestors did to preserve the Union. I know personally some who have recited, in casual conversations where I was a listener, incidents occurring in their service that illustrated the hardships of their work, which, in spite of obstacles, were demonstrative of the courage and spirit which animated *them* when they first donned the shoulder straps, and showed what could be done when necessity demanded prompt action and a devotion to duty.

Such incidents should now be recalled, and they would teach self-reliance and earnest preparation for military service should the future present opportunities for action in behalf of the public welfare. Doubtless there are many who could write such papers and they should do it.

The sympathies of the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of those who went to the front increased that feeling. *They* had felt all the agonies and heart-wrenchings of those dreadful periods during which they awaited the news from the battle-field in which their loved ones were offering their lives for their

beloved country's safety, and all the varying emotions that were experienced when the official reports came out telling them to rejoice or to grieve as the fate of their dear ones was made known.

They had nursed the sick and wounded, they had comforted the widows and the orphans, and they became the mothers of generations taught by them to revere and to love the flag under which their husbands and fathers had fought. Their aid and the assistance of their daughters can ever be relied upon by us and our successors in the Loyal Legion in our effort to carry out successfully the objects and purposes of our organization. Throughout the length and breadth of the land, at countless hearthstones have those fathers and mothers, husbands and wives told over and over again the stories of the Civil War. Their children in their homes or in their schools have been thrilled by the narratives of the experiences in camp life, in the marchings and the battles in which their soldier parents had participated!

Do we not see in these facts the glorious good work accomplished through the existence of our Order? The obligations of our Constitution impel every member of the Loyal Legion to encourage the present and future generations to cultivate, for the protection of our nation's honor and solidarity, the military science, wherever such teaching is possible.

Never so much as at the present time is the aid of our best efforts needed to inculcate the doctrine of pure patriotism in the breasts of our fellow-countrymen. The noble aspirations which carried us victorious through that greatest of modern wars and seemed to assure the continued safety of our beloved country do not appear to be fostered by many who occupy responsible positions in the public eye.

Doctrines that tend to the destruction of all we have been taught to cherish are openly advocated, and find ready followers

amongst those who have never studied with true and loyal interest the history of the struggles of the days of the Revolution and of the Civil War.

The integrity of the Constitution itself is assailed, and with insidious craft is the effort made to pull down the structure of the Constitutional Government for which we have fought, believing it to be, as we have made the world believe, the greatest and most perfect form of government ever devised by the wisdom of patriotic statesmen for the protection of the rights of liberty-loving men.

We have been taught, and experience confirmed the truth of what we have learned that only in the integrity of the Constitution of the United States was to be found the safety and perpetuity of our republican institutions!

Upon the continuance, unchanged, of the independence of the three co-ordinate branches of our government rests the assurance of our liberties.

Under the Constitution provision is made for effecting any change therein that may be required by the needs of our fellow citizens.

We see to-day the demagogue boldly declaring that those orderly and lawful methods of procedure, which should be followed openly and under the methods which reason and loyalty demand, are to be ignored or swept aside; and that by devious ways and methods, which only the unworthy would adopt, the ignorant, inexperienced and simple-minded are being taught that it is proper to set aside first one and then another of the restrictions and requirements of the Constitution provided for the safeguarding of the welfare of our country, institutions and the integrity of the laws.

Under the Constitution and the laws rightfully construed and enforced, the government should be only entrusted to statesmen whose known experience, intelligence and wisdom would assure



a conduct of the affairs of the government in the best interests of all; yet it is proposed to destroy the uniformity of decisions construing the laws, by substituting therefor the capricious demands of uninformed, ill-guided, and oft corruptly misled factions, whose votes could be purchased to advance base and selfish interests, which would lead to a mass of varying and contradictory so-called decisions, which in their consequences would lead to anarchy in the people, chaos in the laws, and ultimate demoralization as to the rights of the people everywhere.

Under the Constitution *every high officer* of the government takes a *solemn oath of loyalty* to our Constitutional government. A strict observance of such an oath is the only true test of the honorable and loyal citizen. DISREGARD OF THAT OATH IS DISLOYALTY TO THE GOVERNMENT; and when, under the guise of a so-called "progressive" propaganda, the voters are being taught underhanded methods whereby to undermine and change the provisions of the Constitution, it is the solemn duty of loyal men to oppose vigorously all the efforts of those who are leading in the unworthy effort. *There* is the field of endeavor for the survivors of the Civil War, and for their children who love their country.

To provide crusaders in that holy cause is the highest duty of companions of the Loyal Legion of the United States, or our struggles, sufferings and labors in the Civil War will have been in vain!

From him whose heart does not swell with love of country when he recalls the cost of life and blood freely bestowed by our ancestors to secure the safety of our land under the ægis of our Constitution, all that is great and noble has passed away!

And when we see any of our fellow citizens aiming to destroy the integrity of the Constitutional provisions for frankly avowed self-advantage in the search of power in our land, it is the duty of all liberty-loving citizens to proclaim that such doctrines

are not in accord with the teachings of our fathers, it is fraught with danger to the republic and loyalty forbids its existence!

This is a grand and important labor upon which our organization has been loyally and earnestly engaged since its origin.

We witness the result of the work of the Loyal Legion in the wave of patriotic endeavor that has swept over the land. We see it in the public schools and colleges where, as a part of the physical training and education of the young men, military science has been taught, and the value and importance of discipline and drill in armed bodies is impressed upon the student, whilst honor to the flag is the climax in every day's order of duty!

The celebrations of national holidays and of the anniversaries of great victories are lessons to the young and to the strangers who are onlookers. The organizations of "Boy Scouts" are in line with this work, and the young men grow to be inured to the fatigues of the soldier's life.

The reunions of patriotic societies in every great city are made the occasions for arousing lively enthusiasm for the Government which protects us. Whenever our surviving leaders come forward, honors and greetings are showered upon them.

All these things give forcible illustration of the growth of the national spirit of devotion to their country's welfare that is not merely laudable, but which necessarily will be fruitful in creating and perpetuating an ever-increasing army of loyal, vigorous, well-trained young soldiers whose existence may be recognized by the nations of the world, as being ever ready to rally to the defense of the Union from every enemy at home or from abroad, so that ere we all pass away we may well realize that the foundation has been laid deep and wide and strong enough to sustain the superstructure of the Union, however grand the future may see it grow to be.

The eloquent voices of our departed fellow veterans arise from every national cemetery throughout the land, telling to the living the story of *their* supreme glory in having offered their toilings, their sufferings and their lives for the benefit of generations yet to come, who will reap the fruits of their sacrifice in the safe enjoyment of liberty under the flag.

Well may we say with the old Romans: *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori!*

To our sons and successors in membership in this most honorable organization, who, we trust, will faithfully perpetuate its purposes and objects as set out in its constitution, we may safely commit the heritage we leave to them of loyal allegiance to our flag and fidelity to the duties that are required by American citizenship.

Just here let us consider the strength of our force yet remaining to move in this line of action. We have 21 commanderies located in 21 States with a membership of 8,293 companions, 4,553 being survivors of the Civil War. Think of the number of active participants in this work of patriotic endeavor. Should not each and all co-operate earnestly in the good work? Let it be our effort to keep up these evidences of our patriotism, and our labors will be fruitful in good results.

And so the lessons of our Loyal Legion will be ever taught through the coming years, and we may well contemplate the picture of what the future will present, in the thought that when we are gone the pæans of rejoicing will be heard throughout the land from legions of loyal men who will lift their voices to the Most High and pray as we have done,

"Wake in our breasts the living fires  
The holy faith that warmed our sires,  
Thy hand hath made our nation *free*  
To die for her is serving *Thee!*"





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